

think they've struck a soft snap, and energy. they'll loaf and malinger till the cows

I call it cruelty," said his wife with- sharp run. out heat, for she was a woman of sad-

as did her husband, but it was never mentioned between them by a tacit at a time. Twenty-five years of marabsences from home might have ac Mrs. Hapshott's broad, deep bosom.

There had been one child-very many years ago, but it only raised its voic once in the great world and before the mother's heart had quickened in re voice was stilled forever. The Lord had given; He had also taker away, and Mrs. Hapshott endeavored "Blessed be the name of the Lord" with a good grace, though a: times the saying was hard.

shott's voice was quite firm, but there was an added trace of gentleness in it and knew his wife's thoughts had flown justice. You've not been accustomed to mix with men; I have.

"Taking them by and large, and making all allowances, I reckon the sailor man as found in our ships is half dog and half loafer; but if you use a belaying pin judiciously you can sometimes make a workable imitation of a man out of him-in time, Maria, in time."

He broke off to hurl a volley of abuse at the helmsman, who had let the ship sag away a full point from her course. The royal that had rippled evenly for an hour swelled full, and a tiny curl of spray licked over the weather main It was characteristic of the with cynleism. discipline ruling aboard the Uriah B. Gaster that the delinquent stiffened like leaning rod and became absorbed in his work. It was also characteristic that a look of pallid fear overswept his face; his lips seemed to draw back from tobacco stained teeth in a grin of deadly oppression.

"There's a case in point," said the captain, waving his hand at the man. I'd gone to him and said 'Look ye pose; but beyond the pig for ardpolitest manner possible-to hint, as it keen attention to your duty which is a off my head. As it is, he'll not let the ship go off her course for the rest of his trick. I make my men reliableand fear's the only thing to do it."

"All the same I don't like it," said Mrs. Hapshott, leaning over the taffrail and watching the crisp creaminess of the counter, eddied astern and reached like a long white lane toward the further horizon. She listened to the deep boom of the vigorous wind in the swelling canvas aloft; she listened to the thrumming of the cordage, at the hundred and one sounds that bespeak a sailing vessel's life. "I dare say a little sternn ss is a good thing-I'm not one to insist on "softness-I've found that out men ought to be allowed just a little time to themselves.

write letters home when they're workthey've likely got wives and children along the rail until it rested on hers waiting at home for some news of them with the pressure of sympathy. just as I used to wait for news of you. of the children that never would be.

"No, you'll never bear another child." it's one of the jests of fate. There are ward." they're childless all their days; there are others to whom maternity is a curse and they bring child after child into existence. I don't pretend to understand

They'd spend any spare time they might have in playing cards, gambling away their wages in advance," said the skipper with a bit of a sneer. "They aren't the men you take them for,

Maria. Times I think they aren't men -just animals. 'As for wives and children-well, I won't say anything about that, but the fo'c's le hand isn't by nature a marrying do at the best of times. But in a wind-man. You needn't fret about their jammer, it's different, somehow. There's

wives, and if they've children-"

wives and children, lass. They haven't plways something to be done-'And who's to blame if they're almost you for a favor, Hiram; but-somehow, animals?" asked Mrs. Hapshott, taking up the gauntlet valiantly. "You and if I want to see it kept as it should be men like you. They work, they eat, and kept. There's a something within me

If they were treated like men they'd why I want you to do as I ask."

Ashore and at sea are two different wife's attention to the majestic beauty ing and chipping and so on, you know. places," replied the captain of the Uriah of the ship as she plunged through the They'll have to trim sail as usual, so I B. Gaster. 'When I'm ashore I take things easy; when I'm at sea I act actordingly.

B. Gaster. 'When I'm ashore I take things easy; when I'm at sea I act actordingly.

B. Gaster. 'When I'm ashore I take the sparkling water. A fleckiess sky overhead was mirrored in the deeper blue that color is the ship had shaken off the sea; th "Sailormen are dogs, and the more you beat a dog the better it is. So with sailors. Give 'em an easy time, let 'em bounding with life, pulsating with

The snow white canvas aloft was shot across with delicate shadow; all clear, startling, distinct against the turquoise "Grind 'em down, rule 'em with an iron hand, and they'll not only do their sail yardarm busied himself with spike sail yardarm busied himself with spike sea had disgorged under his astonished sea had disgorged under his astonished sea had disgorged under his astonished sail yardarm busied himself with spike sea had disgorged under his astonished sail yardarm busied himself with spike sea had disgorged under his astonished sea had disgorged under his astonished sail yardarm busied himself with spike sea had disgorged under his astonished sail yardarm busied himself with spike sea had disgorged under his astonished sail yardarm busied himself with spike sail yardarm busied h work at the run but they'll come crawling along and ask you for more. That's and tar pot, jockeying the heaving spar with the grim agility of a mountebank. The voice of the mate came along the man and boy, hasn't inclined me to dispute facts as they stand."

sail yardarm busied himself with spike and tar pot, jockeying the heaving spar with the grim agility of a mountebank. The voice of the mate came along the deck from forward; it carried menace in its tone, and three men broke aft at a irons and out of 'em a score of times; thoroughness. in its tone, and three men broke aft at a irons and out of 'em a score of time

They tailed on to a rope and pulled; turn turtle." nothing happened. They pulled again. casting fearsome glances over their I've heard you talk about what you do wondering what new freak would come. shoulders; the rope came in an inch at sea when there's anything special to This, they thought, was merely a piece

Ned life had resulted in a fine endurance fun of the thing." The mate was sail or do something like that so that the everything adrift and set every inch of of marital affection-the skipper's long among them, striking out hard blows; ship'll take care of herself?" the sailors made no attempt to parry "Yes, we brail up and brace aback if counted for that in some measure—the the punishment; they submitted to it that's what you're driving at. But it's moving automatons, nothing more, two were good friends, and bickerings all and seemed to hurl themselves with never done except in cases of great "Swing the main yards," pealed between them were a thing unknown, redoubled energy on their labor. Pres- emergency. And if we were to do it But there had never been tiny hands entity the work was done, and the mate here aboard, and if it ever got out, why, to reach up and caress the old growing came aft slowly, wiping his damaged I'd be the laughing stock of the seven knuckles on the bosom of his shirt.

of the poop. "They're coming to hand, though, and by the time we fetch the southeast trades they'll be a workable ridiculous."

"It isn't as ridiculous as robbing these." rowd. Been brought up in lime juicers, they have; spoilt, just spoilt." He went poor men of one day's rest in the year her decks, below for a piece of rag wherewith to bind up the broken knuckles, and Hapshott turned to his wife with a satisfied wheel and stood there at the con, his

forty years at sea's his record; and he's never been mixed up in a mutiny."

now, while utterly without precedent, hope.
was not entirely out of reason.

to ask you a favor."

mood; we've got a fair breeze, though I don't expect it will last long. By this time to-morrow we'll probably be reaching away along the track we've come. Take time by the forelock, old woman, and speak out.'

"It's Christmas Day in two days

Hapshott opened his mouth and boldly went toward Jones.

Why, lass, they wouldn't know what to do with it if they had it. They'd be his eyes and scratched the back of his coming along in an hour asking for a bullet head. Then he looked to the skip-job. Besides, we aren't fitted for Christmas meals. There's a brace of chickens sternly regarding the motionless comin the coop that'll make our dinner that day—I've been saving them up on pur-

here, my lad, I want to tell you in the politest manner possible—to hint, as it politest manner politest manne were—that you're not displaying that though a wonderful day ashore, she amended. "I always get thinking desirable thing on shipboard, he'd of the Child and of how happy His probably have said that I was balmy, mother must have been, though she ost Him too; she lost Him.'

She thought the wound was fairly healed, but the hot tears gushed to her faded, pathetic eyes. Hapshott himself turned away, for he knew the ache at her heart; it companioned the void at

To hide his emotion he threw gruffness into his voice. "I'm thinking I made a mistake in bringing you to sea. lass," he said. "It isn't a place for women, least of all soft hearted women such as you are. But you begged and prayed, and the owners seemed will-

"It got to be lonely waiting there ashore. Hiram," she said simply, was at nights, when-when the wind ashore dealing with servants; but there howled and the snow fell everywhereis a medium, Hiram, And I think these I saw other women happy and companionable, with their men about them: and it-it was more than I could stand. "How do you think they manage to It would have been easier if--if there'd -if Amos had lived." He understood. ing all day and most of the night? And and his rough gnarled hand crept out

"I'm glad to be here, Hiram," she Think of the little children-" Her said. "Don't go for to think otherwise, voice trailed away into silence. She was But seeing that I'm happy, I'd like to thinking of the children that were not, have those around me happy too. It isn't much to ask-just give the sailors a bit of rest on Christmas Day; let them the doctor had said years ago with a have that pig for a Christmas dinner; wise shake of the head, "It's a pity, but they'll work all the better for it after-

> "We'll get no more fresh meat for months," said Hiram Hapshott. you don't take to salt stuff very kindly, Maria."

"You needn't think of me," she told hlm. "It's a little thing for me to dosacrifice one single luxury for the sake

of making twenty men happy."
"I'll think it over," said her husband noncommittally. I've never heard of, mind you. Christmas might be kept at sea on liners and they don't care a toss about the weather

"For one day things can be left un-done," she said. "It isn't often I ask they sleep—because you think that living so they're kept out of mischief. You've to be like others—and yet—it can only deprayed them; you've made them low, be different if I make it different. That's

time the day's over.' "Then it wouldn't be anything of a holiday. Let them have a proper one, Hiram. Don't let them do this fixin' work, as you call it." He stared at her

we'd feel ourselves lucky if she didn't

"It won't be so bad as that, Hiram "Get moving-you're not here for the hand to the wheel. Don't you shorten or two they would be ordered to cast

seas. They'd never forget it—they'd in- sails flattened to the mast; the ship lost "They aren't quite used to us yet." he vent a nickname for me, and it 'd stick said to Hapshott, pausing at the break forever. Ask me something reasonable, bowing to the imperceptible swell, "They're coming to hand. Maria, and I might see my way to doing atmosphere of peace seemed gradually

"It isn't as ridiculous as robbing these

Hiram Hapshott walked aft to the "There's corroborative evidence for beard. As his wife said, she had asked the blackening sea and shone redly beard. As his wife said, she had asked the blackening sea and shone redly

happy a bit? After all, it's Christmas time, though a man sort of loses the hang of these things at sea. Why not

The mate appeared on deck and the time, Hiram. Are you going to give the skipper was unable to meet his eye, men a Christmas—a proper Christ-mas?" skipper was unable to meet his eye, for he knew that he was softening, But

laughed, a laugh that was pregnant "Mr. Jones" she said, "I've been talk-

-what do they want a holiday for?

"A holiday would do them a lot of good; besides, it's Christmas Day, and its shameful that they shouldn't have a rest then." Mrs. Hapshott was a woman who could assert herself when necessary: and now she talked for the good of Jones's soul. He realized that it was one thing to haze a crew of foreign sailormen and another thing to beat own a determined woman's arguments

her side nothing could prevent the car- were busy.

to credit the evidence of their senses. It was practically a dead calm; the sea, a floor. The stars were peeping out of

"Make fast everything," said the mate They obeyed and stood expectantly. be done when you can't even spare a of gratuitous slave driving; in a moment long years of hardship had made them

"Swing the main yards," pealed the mate from the poop, where he had been The main yards swung aback, the topwhat little way she had and lay lightly to grow up about her; beyond the occasional light clank of a chain or the rustle of a rope there was silence along

"Muster aft here," cried Hapshott. The men slouched along to the afterhead sunk on his breast, fingering his poop break. The moon sprang up from you," he said. "Jones knows the sailor from top to toe—there isn't a trick he isn't wise on. You can't bluff him—now, while utterly without precedent. It showed tattered garments, loosely hanging arms terminating in edible, it gave them cause to think, will, to the dead child. "It's common justice. You've not been accurately in the seat, though," was "D- it!" he exploded so suddenly half clenched fists as if the tarry fingers

with cynicism.

"Give them a Christmas—a proper Christmas! By which I suppose you mean a holiday and Christmas fare?"

Why, lass, they wouldn't know with Capt. Hapshott asking their assumed age, and became young and comely once more. It was Christmas fare? Trikey." he said with an eath, "it minds me of the things my old mother used for to knit when I was a boy," and his face took on a softened expression.

"Crikey." he said with an eath, "it minds me of the things my old mother used for to knit when I was a boy," and his face took on a softened expression.

"What's what?" He had been thinking what a feel he would seem if the fast. where Christmas had been a festival pression.

hat," went on Hapshett, "She's asked me to give you a Christmas-a Christ-Make the most of it. There'll be a fresh mess served for dinner to-morrow, and there'll be grog for all hands at eight bells. That's alldismiss."

The men broke up, walked forward dowly, then, as if moved by a common mpulse, they came back, inderterminate still. "Ve vish der lady for to dank."

his cap. "Hey, boys, vat you says? Aind't it right?"

off for an hour or two."

eyes smarted. A stiffening of the rew dings, and as toothsome as it was vast. foolishness. My mind is playing me Mrs. Hapshott had carried her point. was followed by something faintly re- Came, in the midst of the revels, a call tricks, husband." short, "said Mrs. Hapshort, "said Mrs. Hapshort tile instelled in the fact and the flat in the flat i

> their arms'll ache a pretty deal by the work swiftly, albeit they were unable west; never twice in the same direction; man, receiving his allowance, raised his but hove to as she was the Uriah B. drinking vessel in the direction of Mrs. Gaster made no headway. Men walked Hapshott, who was watching them apart from a few ripples, showed like soft footedly in the gloom, as if afraid from above, and drank a silent toast to to make the slightest sound that would her and to the memory of Christmases ing the sparkle of water spring garg. the purpling blue overhead, burning dispel the Christmas peace; they talked past. in hushed voices, remembering their homes and scenes forgotten.

> > There were times when the wind freshening a little Mr. Jones had to haul himself back by sheer force from giving the necessary orders. Three times during his watch did he halt on the top of the ladder, his arm full of belaying pins; when the last rag of canvas was stowed. as often he retraced his steps and thoughtfully thrust the pins back into

The day broke glowingly, the sun leaped out of the sea as if surprised at spectacle it discovered. The Uriah B. Gaster floated serenely in a welter of eddies, but no long creamy wake stretched astern from her jolting rudder; peace enshrouded her as a tangible

The men seemed not to understand. hung about the forecastle doors a call to labor, but no such call came had happened. One or two of them not be assuaged. Vainly now did she fetched tubs and commenced to wash their clothes, lighting their pipes as they worked-and they lit them covertly, as and swift to repay a kindly action.

covered men among the opposite discussed this strange happening in undertones, but they rejoiced in their shead; she heard the voice of the mate. Two secon is she looked, then shead; she heard the voice of the mate. Two secon is she looked, then shead; she heard the voice of the mate. out of the ordinary, too; toothsome.

bells having sounded aft, Mrs. Hap-Mrs. Hapshott's reply, "Hiram, I want to ask you a favor."

spokes and trembled: "why not? I shott drew near to the pinrail and looked don't pretend to say whose fault it is down, her heart welled full of pity. She piled high with gifts. From the com-"Ask away, lass. I'm in a good cood: we've got a fair breeze, though I one she might have been more reasonon't expect it will last long. By this able, but why shouldn't I make her day's rest at least.

"Ask away, lass. I'm in a good that she hasn't a child—if there'd been had done something—she had given these overworked beasts of burden one hands had been busy with pins and day's rest at least. wool, and now there was something marvellous discovery-somewhere in the humor "It's stand by till midnight to-morrow," said the skipper in a voice that
the fondly hoped betrayed no shame.

The for them all: warm caps that completely covered a man's head and held
the fondly hoped betrayed no shame.

The first stand by till midnight to-morpletely covered a man's head and held
the fondly hoped betrayed no shame.

The first stand by till midnight to-morpletely covered a man's head and held
the fondly hoped betrayed no shame. take your wheels and lookouts as usual; one was forgotten. Even the greasy

where Christmas had been a festival of delight in those bygone days before the hungry sea claimed them as its own.

"I hope you'll have a merry Christmas, men," said Mrs. Hapshott, and they cheered her—they were gaining and quivering, but all beyond was still swinging yards. "You've got to thank my wife for practice-until the idle yards seemed dark to swing in answer.

> wherever they looked. Dinner time came round, and steaming kits were passed into the forecastle, kits that contained savory joints from the porker killed overnight. The men ate and were ding appeared they stared with awestruck eyes.

"Don't thank me, thank the missus" grunted a German sailmaker, fingering said the cook, who brought the duff woman's voice was full of something to in person. "She made it herself-last which her husband could put no name "Yes, ja-dot's it, Hans," came the night; mixed the whole blame thing "Well, ma'am," he said lamely at the replies. Mrs. Hapshott was aware of a with her own hands Ain't it a 'oner?"

OU'RE a hard man, Hiram act like men, and they wouldn't try to "Well, we might stop work," he said end, "I shan't interfere if they do lie strange compression in her throat; her Hapshott," said Mrs. Hap-forget the miseries they've suffered at half ungraciously. "I daren't look Jones off for an hour or two." Each man, presenting a pannikin, re-Throughout the night nothing was ceived a tot of sterling grog, for Capt. briskly along the deck until she reached

> So the wonderful day passed away and once again night drooped down upon the sea.

"We'll have to make up for what we've lost," said the skipper over the supper table that night. "We ought to have been a good forty miles further south than we are." He was beginning to repent his action, but the serene content of his wife's face more than made up for this tumbling apart of accepted

"But the men have holiday till midnight; don't forget that," said Mrs. Hap-"They've enjoyed their day-I know it. Hiram. I'm glad I spoke-I'm glad I spoke."

She went to bed, but sleep deserted her eyelids.

The craving for motherhood that the sappiness of the day had set aside returned to her in double measure; the did she assure herself that God was just Her child was gone forever; there

Since there was none to say them has altogether useless, Twenty men had her intervention; that in itself was something to remember with gratitude. was it a shadow, was it the fin newly come on deck, bawling to the aft, the mea watching her in wor and leap through the growing waves; the heard the strain and creak of the he would have shaken her off wath deck planks, the vibrant senses of speed, laugh at her self-delusion, but began to give place to a growing sus- serious against his will.

beyond that—nothing Understand?"

A faint whisper semed to pass through the ranks, as one might see the wind rustle along a cornfield. One or two of the faces lit up suddenly, sloughed off

"Crikey." he said with an oath, "it sailors love. Mrs. Hapshott clutched at whither he had descended, to whith the face had been supported by the things my old mather.

ing what a fool he would seem if the story were ever told of the day now "There's a raft out there-

It was undoubtedly a lazy day; it he told her. "Yes, that's what it is lowered; it was he who urged appeared all the more lazy through the days of the control of the contr appeared all the more lazy through the dawn. It's their way of welcoming it." the thing was done, was possesunfinished tasks that met their eyes Mrs. Hapshott drew herself to the a curious calmness, that yet taffrail and leaned out, listening. The wind was failing again; the ship had almost lost her way; she was only her vision; but all was works rawling through the water to the ac- gether for good. She tried to f ompaniment of flapping canvas aloft 'apt, Hapshott began to pace the deck, sking to windward to see what prom- all unused to the task, and coul se the growing day would bring.
"Hiram, it wasn't a sea bird!" The

"It must have been-what else could

"To me it sounded like-but, no, that's

to step down the ladder and to walk plained to herself what impulse her there: it was something outside detachedly, yet compelling her to its behests.

She crouched up in the bows, wat ling from the forefoot, watching frothing bubbles stream away side the block bluff bow. Alway same feeling of suspense, as if trembled on the verge of a great covery, held her enthralled. Vainly she shook herself and assured her own heart of its foolishness. Vainly

she tried to drag herself away from her self-appointed post. The air was chill with the beginnings of the dawn wind: she shivered repeatedly and remained. The ship woke to life about her; that men flew sloft and busied themselves there; some of them flung water

the dry planking and scrubbed st with brooms. There seemed an extra amo zest in the way they worked, as leisure of the day now gone has vigorated them, filled them with

sire to work marvels. Mrs. Hapshott lifted her eye searched the sea's far rim. Her man returned, only to be lifted again; denly she stiffened where she and her ears strained.

She sprang upon the rail and Was it fancy or could she actual in the waste of war

"Hiram-out there-what is it, She was clutching at him hysteri

What is it? Where?" He w

her, he said, for never a

The finger pointed "Hiram, I heard a cry." He fetch d his binoculars and fo

It was Capt. Hapshott hims "A sea bird-your nerves are on edge," sprang into the boat that was

> binoculars on the boat and on ment that floated ahead but s The boat turned-hung mot

those aboard were busy at som Then the oars shot out like the a gigantic spider; Mrs. Hapshot beat faster and faster-so fast with difficulty could she di breath. "Shall we haul you up, sir"

the mate, reaching far from Capt. Hapshott's lips hoarse, unreal cry that Jones an affirmative. The boat shot alongside; still

tain's wife did not move from tion by the mizzenmast. were hook d on, men swarmed ind added their weight to the boat leaped upward, was swu "Bear a hand here," she husband say, and then vanished from her eyes and Capt. Hapshott w aft, talking earnestly to the m

his arms he carried a little They said afterward that M

shott might have been expegift from the sea. She held out her arms and wailing mite, hushing it deft that broad maternal bosom coaxing it, smiling down rumpled face. It mattered her how the babe had con there; its liny fingers around its little head nestled against "A dead woman and a liv no signs of identification." came to her fitfully, forcing brough the strange, hallows filled her being, "No tel happened -must be wife of per-sole survivors-who k woman's dead, poor thingseems strong enough-will be "If we'd been sailing yest have passed it in the dark li the mate; "we'd never hav

grown younger." The skipper walked across "We'll have to advertise shakily, toying with the littl hands, "Hut likely no one w it's as much ours as any tell the steward to make s

God! look at Mrs. Haps

"Unto us a child is given." Hapshott solemnly. "Hiran God's Christmas present to

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Even the greasy cook, a man foul of speech and unclean habits, found himself the possessor of a sleeved waistcoat knitted out of the fleeciest wool.